indicating the precise stand taken by India during the last eight months; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction in each of such cases?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) to (c) India's stand in world fora has been based on our principled position on issues, bearing in mind our national interest. Far from being isolated in the UN, we have maintained our traditional solidarity with NAM and G-77 and actively promoted consensus-building on a wide range of issues.

At the WTO, particularly at the recent Ministerial Conference in Singapore, we worked closely with other like-mined countries for an outcome which safeguards India's besic position.

Pressure by U.S. Federal Communications Commission for reduction in rates of International Calls

*171. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI:
SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the U.S. Federal Communications Commission has alleged that India has been charging more by way of accounting rates on international calls;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the said U.S. Agency is pressurising all developing countries to reduce international telephone charges and Total Accounting Rates (TAR);

(c) if so, whehter the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) has made any protest to the U.S. Agency and the response thereto; and

(d) the other steps Government propose to take to oppose the move of U.S. Agency?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The U.S. Federal Communication Commission have released on 19.12.1996 a "Notice of Proposed Rule Making" (NPRM) which sets out their proposals for revising their bench-mark settlement rates for international message telephone service (IMTS) between the USA & other countries within a suggested transition period. The objective of this proceeding, according to the Federal Communication Commission, is to attain reform in the international accounting rate system and there by help to lower international calling prices for consumers. Comments of interested Parties have been solicited on their proposals.

(c) Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. has filed its response to FCC's proposal expressing its reservations on the "Notice of Proposed Rule Making", but no response has been received, so far.

(d) A reply at the level of the Government is also proposed to be sent shortly.

पिछड़े क्षेत्रों के लिए अलग विभाग की स्थापना

*172. **श्री शिव चरण सिंह:** क्या गृह मंत्री 4 सितम्बर, 1996 को राज्य सभा में अतारांकित प्रश्न 3042 के दिए गए उत्तर को देखेंगे और यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या केन्द्रीय सरकार राजस्थान, उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार और मध्य प्रदेश के अविकसित क्षेत्रों के समुचित विकास हेतु एक पृथक विभाग की स्थापना करने का विचार रखती है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है और यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं?

गृह मंत्री (श्री इन्द्रजीत गुप्त): (क) जी नहीं, श्रीमान्।

(ख) अविकसित क्षेत्रों का उचित विकास, योजना आदि के वर्तमान तंत्र के माध्यम से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। क्षेत्रीय असन्तुलन कम करने के लिए उत्तरोत्तर पंचवर्षीय योजनाओं में विभिन्न स्कीमें और कार्यक्रम चलाए गए हैं।

Sukhoi-30 Aircrafts

*173. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received Sukhoi-30 Fighter aircrafts from Russia as per agreement;